

VLR-9/9/69 NRHP-10/15/66 NHL-12/19/60

Form 10.300  
(July 1959)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE Virginia	
COUNTY Rockbridge	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	10/15/66

NHL

1. NAME	
COMMON: LEE CHAPEL	
AND/OR HISTORIC:	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Washington & Lee University			
CITY OR TOWN: Lexington			
STATE Virginia 24450	CODE 51	COUNTY Rockbridge	CODE 163

3. CLASSIFICATION			
CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Public Acquisition: In Process Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes: Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Board of Trustees, Washington & Lee University			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Lexington	STATE: Virginia 24450	CODE 51	
LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS ETC. Rockbridge County Courthouse			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Lexington	STATE: Virginia 24450	CODE 51	

6. PRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: HABS			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1934			
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: D.C.	CODE 11	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia  
COUNTY: Rockbridge  
ENTRY NUMBER  
FOR NPS USE  
DATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

☒ Excellent    ☐ Good    ☐ Fair    ☐ Deteriorated    ☐ Ruins    ☐ Unexposed

(Check One)

☐ Altered    ☒ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved    ☐ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

a. **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:** The Victorian-Gothic chapel which stands on the campus of Washington and Lee University, facing the colonnaded porticoes of the main college buildings, commemorates the last and, in many ways, the noblest phase of the life of Robert E. Lee. More than a repository of his mortal remains, it is a monument to his unceasing efforts to erase the bitter feelings engendered by the Civil War, and to provide proper training for the youth of the South.

When Lee came to Washington College, as it was then known, in the fall of 1865, the institution was nearly defunct. Under his inspiring leadership, the enrollment increased sharply, the curriculum was constantly expanded, and the physical plant was greatly improved. The brick chapel, authorized in 1866, was erected on a site selected by Lee and quite possibly from funds partially supplied by him. In the basement of the building he maintained his office, conducting there the administrative duties of the institution until his last illness. On September 25, 1870, Lee left his office for the last time. Two and a half weeks later--October 15, 1870--his funeral services were held on the floor above, and his body was placed in a temporary vault.

Status: A large vault in the basement of the chapel holds the remains of Lee, his wife and a number of other members of his family. Adjoining the vault is Lee's office, remaining just as he left it on his last day. Nearby is a small museum on the life of Lee and on the institution which the trustees, immediately after his death, renamed Washington and Lee.

b. **BOUNDARIES:** Lee Chapel is located just off Jefferson Street, on the campus of Washington & Lee University, Lexington, Virginia.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian    ☐ 16th Century    ☐ 18th Century    ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century    ☐ 17th Century    ☒ 19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

1867

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               |  | <u>Historic Building</u>                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In this chapel on the campus of Washington and Lee University,  
 Robert E. Lee and members of his family are buried. The chapel  
 also contains Lee's office as President of the University, and  
 now contains the famous Valentine recumbent.

# 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Douglas S. Freeman, R. E. Lee, A Biography (4 vols., New York, 1936), Vol. IV; Franklin P. Riley, General Robert E. Lee After Appomattox (New York, 1922); Robert E. Lee Jr., Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee (New York, 1905).

# 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	0 0 0	0 0 0		37 47 13	79 26 32	
NE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SE	0 0 0	0 0 0				
SW	0 0 0	0 0 0				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One-half acre.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

# 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Frank S. Melvin	
ORGANIZATION: Virginia State Office, National Park Service	DATE: 6/30/72
STREET AND NUMBER: Box 10008	
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE: Virginia 23240 CODE: 51

# 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

# NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☐ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date 9/9/69

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 10/15/66

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

U.S.G.S. 7½' quadrangle (Scale:1:24000)  
Lexington, Va. 1967

Washington & Lee Preservation District

Latitude	Longitude
NW 37° 47' 24"	79° 26' 40"
NE 37° 47' 24"	79° 26' 24"
SE 37° 47' 08"	79° 26' 24"
SW 37° 47' 08"	79° 26' 40"

